THE HISTORIE OF THE LIFE AND DEATH OF THE

Lord CROMVVELL, ſometimes Earle of *Eſſex*, and Lord Chancellor of *England*.

By MICHAEL DRAYTON Eſquier.

AT LONDON,
Imprinted by FELIX KYNGSTON, for *William Welby*, dwelling in Pauls Churchyard at the ſigne of the Greyhound.
1609.

TO THE DESERVING MEMORIE OF MY WORTHY PATRON Sir *Walter Aſton*, Knight of the honorable Order of the Bath, I conſecrate my ſhort Poem.

TO THE READER.

TO thee that ſhalt peruſe this Poem, and not conuerſant in the hiſtories of thoſe times, (I am perſwaded) theſe briefe Annotations ſhall not be altogether impertinent. By reaſon the letter (without my knowledge) was choſen too large for the paper, I am conſtrained to doe as men ſometime preparing great baukets, and deceiued of table roome, to ſend in one diſh what ſhould haue ſerued to ſet out many; as to put in this one preface what ſhould haue been in marginall notes ſtuck in ſundrie places againſt the ſtanzaes to which they are apropriate: as this.

The 9. page, the 2. ſtanza, *For hauing Boſton buſineſſe* &c. The towne of *Boſton* ſued to the Pope for the reauthorizing their Hauen, which had been ſuſpended from that Sea, ſelecting one *Chambers* for that buſineſſe, who being on his way at *Antwerpe*, finding *Cromwell*, a man induſtrious and experienced, made choyce of him as his aſſiſtant, both he wan to goe along with him to *Rome*.

The 11. page, the 1. ſtanza, *Ruſſell and Pace* &c. both great States-men of that time, and imployed by *Henry* the 8. in forraine Intelligence, after both Secretaries, and *Ruſſell* by him created Earle of *Bedford*.

The 15. page, the 3. ſtanza, *Where learned More and Gardiner* &c. For the former ſo famous, as who knoweth not I hold him vnworthie to know; the latter, *Stephen Gardiner*, after Biſhop of *Wincheſter*, a learned and politike Prelate, and one that was in the end a chiefe inſtrument of *Cromwels* ouerthrow.

The 20. page, the 2. ſtanza, *Bedford whoſe life* &c. This was that *Ruſſell*, as I haue ſaid before, by *Henry* the 8. created

ted Earle of *Bedford*; as in the ſame ſtanza, *And reuerend Hayles*, &c. Sir *Chriſtopher Hayles* Maſter of the Rolles, a man in great grace with the King, and an eſpeciall fauourer of *Cromwell*.

The 23. page, the 1. ſtanza, line 2. *Of hoſpitable Friſcobald and mee* &c. This *Friſcobald* a Florentine Merchant, relieuing *Cromwell*, being in great neceſſitie, who after being Chancellor of England he honorably requited. This ſtorie containeth ſome 14. ſtanzaes.

The 28. page, the 3. ſtanza, *And the King late obedient to her lawes, againſt the Clerke of Germany* &c. King *Henry the* 8. wrote a booke againſt *Luther*, which booke afterward *Luther* (forgetting all kingly titles) roughly anſwered.

The 34. page, the 1. ſtanza, *Pierce the wiſe Plowman* &c. The morall of Contrition and the Frier, the matter of which is *Pierce Plowmans* in his viſion, the workmanſhip therof wholly mine owne, containing about 10. ſtanzaes.

FINIS.

TO MASTER MICHAEL DRAYTON his Friend.

I Would my verſes could thy Booke aduance
B'oue theſe two fiends; Enuie, *and* Ignorance.
Thy ſubiect of ſuch worth, thy pen ſo ſmooth,
Cannot eſcape the euer-ſharpned tooth
Of that firſt monſter; *who himſelfe deceiues,*
Whil'ſt like a Cankar, hid among the leaues,
He ſeekes to o're ſpread, conſume, at leaſt deface,
The beautie of thy Muſe, *and* Cromwels *grace.*
Such as haue been thy Apes (and ſhall not bee
Other then ſo) ſhall idely carpe at thee:
So much hath lewdnes wonne vpon this Age,
Such the contempt, the impudence, the rage
Of euery ragged Rymer, who would be
Within himſelfe Monarch of Poeſie.
But let them periſh, whil'ſt thy workes thee raiſe
Vnto a greater fortune, then mens praiſe.

I. Cooke.

To his worthily deare friend Maſter Michael Drayton.

HOw thoſe great titles that imploy our breath
To deck the marble, where our aſhes lie,
Are trophies of the harmes, that in our death
Beſt doe expreſſe our golden miſerie:
This Oracle thy Muſe *diuinely readeſ*
In Cromwels *ſtarres, that could ambition ſee,*
She would not wiſh their ſeeming-happie dreads,
That neereſt Ioue *and his proud thunder bee.*
So ſhort a period Fate hath limited
To giddie power, that breathes but grace and aire,
Soone cloy'd, or thoſe that all haue lauiſhed,
Or they, who full, of getting more deſpayre.
But thy deare rimes, whoſe happie Genius
Breathes a new life to Cromwels *dying name,*
And his rent honors, Enuie ſcattred thus,
Whiles in the booke of that great Herauld Fame,
Nought can them hurt, nor times conſuming ruſt,
Nor th'angry frowne, that idely we adore;
This Pyramis ſhall ſtand, when in the duſt
Their names are laid, the Diadem that wore.

Henry Lucas.

TO HIS WORTHIE FRIEND *Michael Drayton* vpon his Poem.

TO thee true image of Eternitie
Time; that reuolues the grauen leaues of Fate,
(Yet giu'ſt men Lethe *ſted of Memorie,*
Becauſe iniurious to all humane ſtate)
Cromwell *appeares apparelled in verſe,*
The fit'ſt and nobleſt ornament of fame,
The doome of Enuie gravely to reuerſe,
That elſe to darknes had condemn'd his name:
For Time thou know'ſt it only is the Muſe
That Man to immortalitie can raiſe.
O Greatnes how thy ſelfe doeſt thou abuſe,
With the ſlight ſoothing of poore verball praiſe?
Here ſhall you finde Factions (which are the rent,
And diſuniting of a league combin'd)
Make hauock in a ciuill gouerment;
The grace of Kings vnconſtant as the winde.
For as corruptiue bodies doe depend
On humorous matter, motions, and their pauſes;
So States begin, haue progreſſe, and doe end,
Becauſe they ſimpathize with naturall cauſes.
Here ſhall you finde (like muſick ſhifting moode)
How times doe change: viciſſitude and ſway
Of men, and manners; and by ſelfe decay
How each thing liues: ſcorne not the enuious broode
Renowned friend, but triumph in deſart,
Iudgement hath led thy Pen, and Truth thy Art.

Chriſtopher Brooke.

THE LEGEND OF GREAT CROMVVEL.

AWak'd, and trembling betwixt rage and dread
With the lowd ſlander, (by the impious time)
That of my actions euery where is ſpred,
Through which to honour falſely I ſhould clime,
From the ſad dwelling of th'vntimely dead,
To quit me of that execrable crime,
Cromwell appeares his wretched plight to ſhow,
Much that can tell, one much that once did know.

Roughly not made vp in the common mould,
That with the vulgar vilely I ſhould die,
What thing ſo ſtrange of *Cromwell* is not told?
What man more praiſd? who more cõdemn'd then I?
That with the world when I am waxed old,
Moſt t'were vnfit that fame of me ſhould lie
With fables vaine my hiſtorie to fill,
Forcing my good, excuſing of my ill.

You that but hearing of my hated name,
Your ancient malice inſtantly bewray,
And for my ſake your ill deſerued blame
Vpon my legend publikely ſhall lay;
Would you forbeare to blaſt me with defame,
Might I ſo meane a priuiledge but pray,
He that three ages hath endur'd your wrong,
Heare him a little that hath heard you long.

Since *Romes* ſad ruine here by me began,
Who her Religion pluckt vp by the roote,
Of the falſe world ſuch hate for which I wan,
Which ſtill at me her poiſned ſt darts doth ſhoot;
That to excuſe it, doe the beſt I can,
Little I feare my labour me will boote:
Yet will I ſpeake my troubled heart to eaſe,
Much to the minde, her ſelfe it is to pleaſe.

O powerfull number, from whoſe ſtricter law
Heart-mouing muſicke did receiue the ground
Which men to faire ciuilitie did draw
With the brute beaſt when lawleſſe he was found:
O if according to the wiſer ſaw
There be a high diuinitie in ſound,
Be now abundant proſp'rouſly to aide
The pen prepar'd my doubtful caſe to pleade.

Putney

Putney the place made bleſſed in my birth,
Whoſe meaneſt cottage ſimply me did ſhrowd,
To me as deareſt of the Engliſh earth;
So of my bringing that poore village prou'd,
Though in a time when neuer leſſe the dearth
Of happie wits, yet mine ſo well allow'd
That with the beſt ſhe boldly durſt conſer
Him that his breath acknowledged from her.

Twice flow'd proud *Thames* as at my cõming wood,
Striking the wondring borderers with feare,
And the pale *Genius* of that aged flood
Vnto my mother labouring did appeare,
And with a countenance much diſtracted ſtood,
Threatning the fruit her pained wombe ſhould beare:
My ſpeedie birth being added thereunto,
Seem'd to foretell that much I came to doe,

That was reſerued for thoſe worſer daies,
As the great ebbe vnto ſo long a flow,
When what thoſe ages formerly did raiſe,
This when I liu'd did laſtly ouerthrow,
And that great'ſt labour of the world did ſeaze,
Only for which immedicable blow
Due to that time me dooming heauen ordain'd,
Wherein confuſion abſolutely raign'd.

Vainly yet noted this prodigious ſigne,
Often predictions of moſt fearfull things,
As plagues, or warre, or great men to decline,
Riſing of Commons, or the death of Kings;
But ſome ſtrange newes though euer it diuine,
Yet forth them not immediatly it brings;
Vntill the effects men afterward did learne,
To know that me it chiefly did concerne.

Whilſt yet my father by his painfull trade,
Whoſe laboured Anuile only was his fee,
Whom my great towardnes ſtrongly did perſwade
In knowledge to haue educated mee:
But death did him vnluckily inuade,
Ere he the fruites of his deſire could ſee,
Leauing me yong, then little that did know
How me the heauens had purpoſd to beſtow.

Hopeleſſe as helpleſſe moſt might me ſuppoſe,
Whoſe meanneſſe ſeem'd their abiect breath to draw:
Yet did my breaſt that glorious fire incloſe,
Which their dull purblind ignorance not ſaw,
Which ſtill is ſetled vpon outward ſhowes,
The vulgars iudgement euer is ſo raw,
Which the vnworthieſt ſottiſhly doe loue
In their owne region properly that moue.

Yet

Yet me my fortune ſo could not diſguiſe,
But through this cloud were ſome that did me know,
Which then the reſt more happie or more wiſe,
Me did relieue when I was driuen low,
Which as the ſtaier by which I firſt did riſe,
When to my height I afterward did grow,
Them to requite my bounties were ſo hie,
As made my fame through euery eare to flie.

That height and Godlike puritie of minde
Reſteth not ſtill, where titles moſt adorne
With any, nor peculiarly confinde
To names, and to be limited doth ſcorne:
Man doth the moſt degenerate from kinde,
Richeſt and pooreſt both alike are borne;
And to be alwaies pertinently good,
Followes not ſtill the greatnes of our blood.

Pitie it is that to one vertuous man
That marke him lent to gentrie to aduance,
Which firſt by noble induſtrie he wan,
His baſer iſſue after ſhould inhance,
And the rude ſlaue not any good that can,
Such ſhould thruſt downe by what is his by chance:
As had not he been firſt that him did raiſe, (praiſe.
Nere had his great heire wrought his grandſires

How weake art thou that makeſt it thy end
To heape ſuch worldly dignities on thee,
When vpon fortune only they depend,
And by her changes gouerned muſt bee?
Beſides the dangers ſtill that ſuch attend,
Liuel'eſt of all men purtraied out in mee,
When that for which I hated was of all,
Soon'ſt from me fled, ſcarſe tarrying for my fall.

You that but boaſt your anceſtors proud ſtile,
And the large ſtem whēce your vaine greatnes grew,
When you your ſelues are ignorant and vile,
Nor glorious thing dare actually purſue,
That all good ſpirits would vtterly exile,
Doubting their worth ſhould elſe diſcouer you,
Giuing your ſelues vnto ignoble things,
Baſe I proclaime you though deriu'd from Kings.

Vertue but poore, God in this earth doth place
Gainſt the rude world to ſtand vp in his right,
To ſuffer ſad affliction and diſgrace,
Not ceaſing to purſue her with deſpight:
Yet when of all ſhe is accounted baſe,
And ſeeming in moſt miſerable plight,
Out of her power new life to her doth take,
Leaſt then diſmaid when all doe her forſake.

That

That is the man of an vndaunted ſpirit,
For her deare ſake that offereth him to dye,
For whom, when him the world doth diſinherit,
Looketh vpon it with a pleaſed eye,
What's done for vertue thinking it doth merit,
Daring the proudeſt menaces defie, (him,
More worth then life, how ere the baſe world rate
Belou'd of heauē, although the earth doth hate him.

Iniurious time, vnto the good vniuſt,
O how may weake poſteritie ſuppoſe
Euer to haue their merit from the duſt,
Gainſt them thy partialitie that knowes
To thy report O who ſhall euer truſt,
Triumphant arches building vnto thoſe
Alowd the longeſt memorie to haue,
That were the moſt vnworthie of a graue?

But my cleere mettle had that powerfull heate,
As it not turn'd with all that fortune could:
Nor when the world me terribleſt did threat,
Could that place winne which my hie thoughts did
That waxed ſtill more proſperouſly great, (hold,
The more the world me ſtroue to haue control'd,
On my owne Columes conſtantly to ſtand,
Without the falſe helpe of anothers hand.

My

My youthfull courſe thus wiſely did I ſteere,
T'auoid thoſe rocks my wrack that elſe did thret:
Yet ſome faire hopes from farre did ſtill appeare,
If that too much my wants me did not let:
Wherefore my ſelfe aboue my ſelfe to beare,
Still as I grew I knowledge ſtroue to get,
To perfect that which in the Embryon was,
Whoſe birth I foūd time well might bring to paſſe.

But when my meanes to faile me I did finde,
My ſelfe to trauell preſently betooke,
As much diſtaſtfull to my noble minde,
That the vile world into my wants ſhould looke,
And of my ſelfe induſtriouſly inclinde,
To meaſure others actions with my booke,
I might my iudgement rectifie thereby,
In matters that were difficult and hie.

When loe it hapt that fortune as my guide,
Of me did with ſuch prouidence diſpoſe,
That th'Engliſh Merchants then who did reſide
At *Antwerpe*, me their Secretarie choſe,
(As though in me to manifeſt her pride)
Whence to thoſe principalities I roſe,
To pluck me downe, whence afterward ſhe fear'd
Beyond her power that almoſt ſhe had rear'd

When

When firſt the wealthie *Netherlands* mee train'd
In wiſe commerce moſt proper to the place,
And from my countrie carefully me wain'd,
That with the world did chiefly winne me grace,
Where great experience happily I gain'd;
Yet here I ſeem'd but tutor'd for a ſpace,
For hie imployment otherwiſe ordain'd,
Till which the time I idely entertain'd.

For hauing *Toſſon* buſineſſe in hand,
The charge thereof on *Chambers* being laid,
Comming to *Flanders* hapt to vnderſtand
Of me, whom he requeſted him to aid;
Of which when I the benefit had ſcand,
Weighing what time at *Antwerpe* I had ſtaid,
Quickly me wonne faire *Italy* to trie,
Vnder a cheerefull and more luckie skie:

For what the meaneſt cleerely makes to ſhyne,
Youth, wit, and courage, all in me concurre
In euery proiect, that to powerfull tryne
By whoſe kinde working brauely I did ſturre,
Which to each hie and glorious deſigne
(The time could offer) freely did me ſpurre,
As fortune fate ſome new thing to prepare
(Shewing ſucceſſe) t'attempt that could me dare:

Where now my ſpirit got roomth it ſelfe to ſhow,
To the fairſt pitch doth make a gallant flight,
From things that too much earthly were and low,
Strongly attracted by a Genuyne light,
Where higher ſtill it euery day did grow;
And being in ſo excellent a plight,
Craud but occaſion happily to proue
How much it ſate each vulgar ſpirit aboue.

The good ſucceſſe th'affaires of *England* found,
Much praiſ'd the choice of me that had been made:
For where moſt men the depth durſt hardly ſound,
I held it nothing boldly through to wade
My ſelfe, and through the ſtraitſt waies I woond.
So could I act, ſo well I could perſwade
As meerely Iouiall, me to mirth applie,
Compoſ'd of freedome and alacritie.

Not long it was ere *Rome* of me did ring
(Hardly ſhall *Rome* ſo full daies ſee again)
Of freemens catches to the Pope I ſing,
Which wan much licence to my countrimen,
Thither the which I was the firſt did bring,
That were vnknowne to *Italy* till then:
Light humours them when iudgement doth direct,
Euen of the wiſe winne plauſible reſpect.

And

And thoſe from home that penſions were allow'd,
And here did for Intelligence remaine,
Vnder my power themſelues were glad to ſhroud,
Ruſſell and *Pace* yea oftentimes were faine,
When as their names they durſt not haue auow'd,
Me into their ſocietie t'retaine,
Riſing before me mightie as they were,
Great though at home, yet did they need me there.

In forraine parts here friends I yet forſake
That had before been deeply bound to mee,
And would againe I vſe of them ſhould make,
But ſtill my ſtarres command I ſhould be free,
And all thoſe offers lightly from me ſhake,
Which to requite I fettred elſe might bee;
And though that oft great perils me oppunge,
And meanes were weak, my mind was euer ſtrong.

And thoſe great wants fate to my youth did tie
Me from delights of thoſe rich countries dryue,
Thereby inforc'd with painfull induſtrie
Againſt affliction manfully to ſtryue
Vnder her burthen faintly not to lie,
But ſince my good I hardly muſt deryue,
Vnto the ſame to make my ſelfe a way
Through all the power againſt me ſhe could lay.

As a Comedian where my life I led,
For ſo a while my need did me conſtraine,
With other my poore countrimen (that plai'd)
Thither that came in hope of better gaine,
Whereas when fortune ſeem'd me low to tred
Vnder her feete, ſhe ſet me vp againe,
Vntill the vſe me bad her not to feare
Her good and ill that patiently could beare.

Till *Charles* the fift th'emperiall power did bend
Gainſt *Rome*, which *Burbon* skilfully did guide,
Which ſore declining *Italy* did rend;
For th'right that him her holineſſe denide,
Wholly her ſelfe inforced to defend
Gainſt him that iuſtly punished her pride,
To which my ſelfe I haſtly did betake,
Seeing thereof what fortune meant to make.

And at the ſiege with that great Generall ſerv'd,
When he did girt her ſtubborne waſte with ſteele,
Within her walls who well neere being ſtarv'd,
And that with faintnes ſhe began to reele,
Shewing her ſelfe a little as ſhe ſwarv'd:
Firſt her then noting I began to feele,
She whoſe great power ſo far abroad did roame,
What in her ſelfe ſhe truly was at home.

That

That the great ſchoole of the falſe world was then,
Where her's their ſubtill practiſes did vie,
Amongſt that mightie confluence of men,
French plots propt vp by Engliſh policie,
The German powers, falſe ſhuffling, and agen
All countermin'd by skilfull *Italy*,
Each one in poſſibilitie to win,
Great reſts were vp and mightie hands were in.

Here firſt to worke my buſie braine was ſet,
(My inclination finding it to pleaſe
This ſtirring world which ſtrongly ſtill did whet)
To temper in ſo dangerous aſſaies,
Which did ſtrange formes of policies beget;
Beſides in times ſo turbulent as theſe,
Wherein my ſtudies hopefully did bend
Vnto that point the wiſeſt made their end:

And my experience happily me taught
Into the ſecrets of thoſe times to ſee,
From whence to *England* afterward I brought
Thoſe ſlights of ſtate deliu'red vnto mee,
In t'which were then but very few that ſought,
Nor did with th'umour of that age agree,
After did great and fearfull things effect,
Whoſe ſecret working few did then ſuſpect.

When though t'were long it hapned yet at laſt
Some hopes me homeward ſecretly allur'd,
When many perils ſtrangely I had paſt,
As many ſad calamities endur'd
Beyond the Moone, when I began to caſt
By my rare parts what place might be procur'd,
If they at home were to the mightie knowne,
How they would ſeeme cõpared with their owne.

Or if that there the great ſhould me neglect,
As I the worſte that vainly did not feare,
To my experience how to gaine reſpect
In other countries that doe hold it deare,
And now occaſion ſeemed to reiect,
Whil'ſt ſtill before me other riſing were,
And ſome themſelues had mounted to the skie,
Little before vnlike to thriue as I.

When now in *England* Bigamie with blood
Lately begot by luxurie and pride,
In their great'ſt fulnes peremptorie ſtood;
Some thereunto that diligently prï'd,
Stillie were fiſhing in that troubled flood
For future changes wiſely to prouide,
Finding the world ſo rankly then to ſwell,
That till it brake it neuer could be well.

But floting long vpon my firſt arryue,
Whilſt many doubts me ſeemed to appall,
Like to a barke that with the tide doth dryue,
Hauing not left to faſten it withall,
Thus with the time by ſuffring I doe ſtryue
Vnto what harbor doubtfull yet to fall;
Vntill inforc'd to put it to the chance,
Caſting the fairſt my fortune to aduance.

Making my ſelfe to mightie *Wolſey* knowne,
That *Atlas* which the gouerment vpſtai'd,
Which from meane place in little time was growne
Vp vnto him, that weight vpon him lai'd,
And being got the neereſt to his throne,
He the more eaſly the great kingdome ſwai'd,
Leaning thereon his wearied ſelfe to breath,
Whilſt euen the greateſt farre ſat him beneath.

Where learned *More* and *Gardiner* I met,
Men in thoſe times immatchable for wit,
Able that were the dulleſt ſpirit to whet,
And did my humour excellently fit,
Into their ranke that worthily did get
There as their proud competitor to ſit,
One excellence to many is the mother,
Wit doth as creatures one beget another.

This Founder of the palaces of Kings,
Whoſe veines with more then vſuall ſpirit were fild,
A man ordained to the mighti'ſt things,
In *Oxford* then determining to build
To Chriſt a Colledge, and together brings
All that thereof the great foundation wills,
There me imploies, whoſe induſtrie he found
Worthie to worke vpon the nobleſt ground.

Yet in the entrance wiſely that did feare
Coyne might fall ſhort, yet with this worke on fire,
Wherefore ſuch houſes as Religious were
Whoſe being no neceſſitie require,
But that the greater very well might beare,
From *Rome* the Card'nall cunningly did hier,
Winning withall his Soueraigne to conſent,
Both colouring with ſo holy an intent.

This like a ſymptome to a long diſeaſe
Was the forerunner to this mightie fall,
And but too vnaduiſedly did ceaze
Vpon the part that ruinated all,
Which had the worke been of ſo many daies
And more againe, recouer hardly ſhall:
But loe it ſunke which time did long vphold,
Where now it lies euen leueld with the mould.

Thus

Thus thou great *Rome* here firſt waſt ouerthrowne,
Thy future harmes that blindly couldſt not ſee,
And in this worke they only were thine owne,
Whoſe knowledge lent that deadly wound to thee,
Which to the world before had they not ſhowne,
Nere had thoſe ſecrets been deſcri'd by mee,
Nor by thy wealth ſo many from the plow
Worne thoſe hie types wherein they floriſh now.

After when as the Cardinall againe
Into hie fauour with the King mee brought,
With whom my ſelfe ſo well I did demeane,
As that I ſeem'd to exerciſe his thought,
And his great liking ſtrongly did retaine
With what before my Maſter me had taught,
From whoſe example by thoſe Cels were ſmall,
Sprang the ſubuerſion laſtly of them all.

Yet many a let was caſt into the way,
Wherein I ran ſo ſteddily and right,
And many a ſnare my aduerſaries lay,
Much wrought they with their power, much with their (ſlight,
Wiſely perceiuing that my ſmalleſt ſtay
Fully requir'd the vtmoſt of their might,
To my aſcendant haſting me to clime,
There as the firſt predomining the time,

Knowing what wealth me earneſtly did wooe,
Which I through *Wolſey* hapned had to finde,
And could the path moſt perfectly vntoo,
The King thereafter earneſtly inclin'd,
Seeing beſides what after I might doe
If ſo great power me fully were aſſign'd,
By all their meanes againſt me ſtrongly wrought,
Lab'ring as faſt to bring their Church to nought.

Whil'ſt to the King continually I ſue,
And in this buſineſſe faithfully did ſtirre
Strongly t'approue my iudgement to be true
Gainſt thoſe who moſt ſuppoſed me to erre,
Nor the leaſt meanes which any way I knew
Might grace me, or my purpoſes preferre
Did I omit, till wonne I had his eare,
Moſt that me mark'd whē leaſt he ſeem'd to heare.

This wound to them thus violently giuen,
Enuie at me her ſharpeſt darts doth roue,
Affecting the ſupremacie of heauen,
As the firſt Giants warring againſt *Ioue*,
Heap'd hils on hils, the Gods till they had driuen
The meaneſt ſhapes of earthly things to proue:
So muſt I ſhift from them againſt me roſe,
Mortall their hate, as mightie were my foes.

But

But their great force againſt me wholly bent
Preuail'd vpon my purpoſes ſo farre,
That I my ruine ſcarſely could preuent,
So momentarie worldly fauours are,
That till the vtmoſt of their ſpight was ſpent,
Had not my ſpirit maintain'd a manly warre,
Riſen they had when laid I had been low,
Vpon whoſe ruine after I did grow.

When the great King their ſtrange reports that tooke
That as pernitious as they potent were,
Which at the faire growth of my fortune ſtrooke,
Whoſe deadly malice blame me not to feare,
Me at the firſt ſo violently ſhooke,
That they this frame were likely downe to beare,
If reſolution with a ſetled brow
Had not vpheld my peremptorie vow.

Yet theſe encounters thruſt me not awry,
Nor could my courſes force me to forſake,
After this ſhipwrack I againe muſt trye
Some happier voyage hopefull ſtill to make,
The plots that barren long we ſee did lie,
Some fitting ſeaſon plentifully take,
One fruitfull harueſt frankly doth reſtore
What many winters hindred had before.

That to account I ſtrickly call my wit
How it this while had managed my ſtate,
My ſoule in counſell ſummoning to ſit,
If poſſible to turne the courſe of fate,
For waies there be the greateſt things to hit,
If men could finde the peremptorie gate,
And ſince I once was got ſo neere the brinke
More then before, t'would grieue me now to ſinke.

Bedford whoſe life (ſome ſaid) that I had ſau'd
In *Italy*, one me that fauoured moſt,
And reuerend *Hayles* who but occaſion crau'd
To ſhew his loue, no leſſe that I had coſt,
Who to the King perceiuing me diſgrac'd,
Whoſe fauour I vnluckily had loſt,
Both with him great, a foote ſet in withall
If not to ſtay, to quallifie my fall.

Hie their regard, yet hier was their hap,
Well neere quite ſunke recouer me that could,
And once more get me into fortunes lap,
Which well my ſelfe might teach me there to hold,
Eſcap'd out of ſo dangerous a trap,
Whoſe praiſe by me to ages ſhall be told,
As the two props by which I only roſe,
When moſt ſuppreſt, moſt trod on by my foes.

This

This me to vrge the premunire wonne,
Ordain'd in matters dangerous and hie,
In t'which the heedleſſe Prelacie were runne,
That back vnto the Papacie did flye,
Sworne to that ſea, and what before was done
Due to the King, diſpenſed were thereby,
In t'which firſt entring offred me the meane
That to throw downe alreadie that did leane.

This was to me that ouerflowing ſourſe,
From whence his bounties plentifully ſpring,
Whoſe ſpeedie current with vnuſuall force
Bare me into the boſome of the King,
By putting him into that readie courſe
Which ſoone to paſſe his purpoſes might bring,
Where thoſe which late imperiouſly controld me,
Pale ſtrook with feare ſtood trẽbling to behold me.

When ſtate to me thoſe ceremonies ſhow'd
That to ſo great a fauorite were due,
And fortune ſtill with honours did me load,
As though no meane ſhe in my riſing knew,
Or heauen to me more then to man had ow'd,
(What to the world vnheard of was and new)
And was to other ſparing of her ſtore
Till ſhe could giue, or ask I could no more.

Thoſe hie preferments he vpon me laid,
Might make the world me publikely to know
Such as in iudgement rightly being wai'd,
Seemed too great for me to vndergoe,
Nor could his hand from powring on be ſtai'd
Vntill I ſo abundantly did flow,
That looking downe whence lately I was cloame,
Danger bid feare if further I ſhould roame.

For firſt from Knighthood riſing in degree,
The office of the Iewell houſe my lot,
After the Rowles he frankly gaue to mee,
From whence a priuie Counſeller I got,
Choſe of the Garter; and the Earle to bee
Of *Eſſex*: yet ſufficient theſe not
But to the great Vicegerencie I grew,
Being a title as ſupreame as new.

So well did me theſe dignities befit,
And honour ſo me euery way became,
As more then man I had been made for it,
Or as from me it had deriu'd the name:
Where was that man whoſe loue I not requit
Beyond his owne imaginarie aime,
Which had me ſuccourd nerely being driuen
As things to me that idely werenot giuen?

What

What tongue ſo ſlow the tale ſhall not report
Of hoſpitable *Friſcobald* and mee,
And ſhew in how reciprocall a ſort
My thankes did with his curteſie agree,
When as my meanes in *Italy* were ſhort
That me relieu'd, leſſe great that would not bee,
When I of *England* Chancellor was made,
His former bounties librally repai'd?

The maner briefly gentler *Muſe* relate,
Since oft before it wiſely hath been told,
The ſudden change of vnauoided fate,
That famous Merchant reuerend *Friſcobald*
Grew poore, and the ſmall remnant of his ſtate
Was certaine goods to *England* he had ſold,
Which in the hands of Creditors but bad,
Small hope to get, yet leſſer meanes he had.

Hither his wants him forcibly conſtrain'd,
Though with long trauell both by land and ſeas,
Led by this hope that only now remain'd,
Whereon his fortune finally he laies,
And if he found that friendſhip here were fain'd,
Yet at the worſt it better ſhould him pleaſe,
Farre out of ſight to periſh here vnknowne,
Then vnrelieu'd bee pitied of his owne.

It chanc'd as I toward *Westminster* did ride,
Mongst the great concourse passing to and fro,
An aged man I happily espide,
Whose outward looks much inward griefe did show,
Which made me note him, and the more I ey'd
Him, me thought more precisely I should know,
Reuoluing long it came into my minde,
This was the man to me had been so kinde:

Was therewithall so ioyed with his sight,
(With the deare sight of his so reuerend face)
That I could scarsely keepe me from t'alight,
And in mine armes him openly embrace;
Weighing yet (well) what some imagine might,
He being a stranger and the publike place
Checkt my affection, till some fitter hower
On him my loue effectually might shower.

Neuer quoth I was fortune so vniust
As to doe wrong vnto thy noble hart,
What man so wicked could betray the trust
Of one so vpright of so good desart,
And though obey necessitie thou must,
As when the great'st the same to me thou art,
Let me alone the last be left of all,
That from the rest declin'd not with thy fall.

And

And calling to a Gentleman of mine,
Wiſe and diſcreete that well I knew to bee,
Shew'd him that ſtranger, whoſe deiected eyne
Fixt on the earth nere once lookt vp at mee,
Bid yonder man come home to me and dine
(Quoth I) beſpeake him reuerently (you ſee)
Scorne not his habit, little canſt thou tell
How rich a minde in thoſe meane rags doth dwell.

He with my name that kindly did him greete,
Slowly caſt vp his deadly-mouing eye,
That long time had been fixed on his feete,
To looke no higher then his miſerie,
Thinking him more calamitie did greete,
Or that I had ſuppoſed him ſome Spye,
With a deepe ſigh that from his heart he drew,
Quoth he his will accompliſht be by you.

My man departed and the meſſage done,
He whoſe ſad heart with ſtrange impreſſions ſtrooke,
To thinke vpon this accident begun,
And on himſelfe ſuſpitiouſly to looke,
Into all doubts he fearfully doth runne,
Oft himſelfe cheering oft himſelfe forſooke:
Strangely perplext vnto my houſe doth come,
Not knowing why iudg'd nor dreading yet his

My ſeruants ſet his comming to attend,
That were therein not common for their skill,
Whoſe vſage yet the former did amend:
He hop'd not good, nor guiltie was of ill,
But as a man whoſe thoughts were at an end,
Fortune (quoth he) then worke on me thy will,
Wiſer then man I thinke he were that knew
Whence this may come, or what therof enſue.

His honoured preſence ſo did me inflame,
That though being then in preſence of my Peeres,
Daine not the leſſe to meete him as he came,
(That very hardly could containe my teares)
Kindly ſalute him, call him by his name,
And oft together aske him how he cheeres,
With ſtill along maintaining the extreame;
Yet thought the man he had been in a dreame.

At length t'wake him gently I began
With this demaund, if once he did not know
One *Thomas Cromwell* a poore Engliſhman,
By him relieu'd when he was driuen low:
When I perceiu'd he my remembrance wan,
Yet with his teares it ſilently did ſhow:
I wept for woe to ſee mine hoſt diſtreſt,
But he for ioy to ſee his happie gueſt.

Him

Him to the Lords I publiſht by my praiſe,
And at my table carefully him ſet,
Recounting them the many ſundrie waies
I was vnto this gentleman indebt,
How great he was in *Florence* in thoſe daies,
With all that grace or reuerence him might get:
Which all the while yet ſilently he heares,
Moiſting(among)his viands with his teares.

And to lend fulnes laſtly to his fate
Great ſummes I gaue him,and what was his due
Made knowne,my ſelfe became his aduocate,
And at my charge his creditors I ſue,
Recouering him vnto his former ſtate:
Thus he the world began by me anew,
That ſhall to all poſteritie expreſſe
His honored bountie and my thankfulneſſe.

But *Muſe* recount, before thou further paſſe,
How this great change ſo quickly came about,
And what the cauſe of this ſad downfall was,
In euery part the ſpatious Realme throughout,
Being effected in ſo little ſpace,
Leaue not thereof poſteritie to doubt,
That with the world obſcured elſe may bee,
If in this place reuealed not by thee.

If the whole land did on the Church relie,
Hauing full power Kings to account to call,
That to the world read only policie,
Beſides Heauens keyes to ſtop or let in all,
Let me but know from her ſupremacie
How ſhe ſhould come ſo ſuddenly to fall:
Twas more then chance ſure put a hand thereto,
That had the power ſo great a thing to do.

Or ought there were had biding vnder Sunne,
Who would haue thought thoſe edifices great,
Which firſt Religion holily begun,
The Church approu'd, and wiſdome richly ſeate,
Deuotion nouriſh'd, faith allowance wonne,
And all that them might any way compleate,
Should in their ruines laſtly buried lye,
But that begun and ended from the skye?

And the King late obedient to her lawes,
Againſt the Clerke of *Germany* had writ,
As he that firſt ſtird in the Churches cauſe,
Againſt him greatlieſt that oppugned it,
And wan from her ſo gratefull an applauſe,
Then in her fauour chiefly that did ſit,
That as the prop, whereon ſhe only ſtaith,
Him ſhe inſtyl'd *Defender of the faith.*

But

But not their power, whoſe wiſdomes them did place
In the firſt ranke, the oracles of ſtate,
Who that opinion ſtrongly did embrace,
Which through the land receiued was of late,
Then ought at all preuailed in this caſe,
O powerfull doome of vnauoided fate,
Whoſe depth not weake mortality can know,
Who can vphold what heauen will ouerthrow?

When time now vniuerſally did ſhow
The power to her peculiarly annex'd,
With moſt abundance then when ſhe did flow,
Yet euery hower ſtill proſp'rouſly ſhe wex'd,
But the world poore did by looſe riots grow,
Which ſerued as an excellent pretext,
And colour gaue to pluck her from her pride,
Whoſe only greatnes ſuffred none beſide.

Likewiſe to that poſteritie did doubt
Thoſe at the firſt not rightly did adore,
Their fathers that too credulous deuout
Vnto the Church contributed their ſtore,
And to recouer only went about
What their great zeale had lauiſhed before,
On her a ſtrong hand violently lai'd,
Praying on that, they gaue for to be pray'd.

And now the King ſet in a courſe ſo right,
Which I for him laboriouſly had tract,
(Who till I learn'd him, did not know his might)
I ſtill to prompt his power with me to act,
Into thoſe ſecrets got ſo deepe a ſight,
That nothing laſtly to his furtherance lackt,
And by example plainly to him ſhowne,
How all might now be eaſly ouerthrowne.

In taking downe yet of this goodly frame
He ſuddenly not brake off euery band,
But tooke the power firſt from the Papall name,
After a while let the Religion ſtand,
When lim by lim he daily did it lame,
Firſt tooke a leg, and after tooke a hand,
Till the poore ſemblance of a bodie left,
But all ſhould ſtay it, vtterly bereft.

For if ſome Abbey hapned voyd to fall
By death of him that the ſuperiour was,
Gaine that did firſt Church libertie enthrall,
Only ſupreame, promoted to the place,
Mongſt many bad the worſt moſt times of all,
Vnder the colour of ſome others grace,
That by the ſlander, from his life ſhould ſpring,
Into contempt it more and more might bring.

This time from heauen when by the ſecret courſe,
Diſſenſion vniuerſally began,
(Preuailing as a planetarie ſourſe)
I'th Church beleeuing, as Mahumitan,
When *Luther* firſt did thoſe opinions nurſe,
Much from great *Rome* in little ſpace that wan,
It to this change ſo aptly did diſpoſe,
From whoſe ſad ruine ours ſo great aroſe.

That here that fabrique vtterly did faile,
Which powerfull fate had limited to time,
By whoſe ſtrong law it naturally muſt quaile,
From that proud height to which it long did clime,
Letting gainſt it the contrary preuaile,
Therein to puniſh ſome notorious crime,
For which at length inſt dooming heauē decreed,
That on her buildings ruine here ſhould feed.

Th'authoritie vpon her ſhe did take,
And vſe thereof in euery little thing,
Finding her ſelfe how oft ſhe did forſake,
In her owne bounds her neuer limiting,
That awfull feare and dud obedience brake
Which her reputed holineſſe did bring,
From ſlight regard ſoone brought her into hate
With thoſe that much diſliked her eſtate.

And

And that thoſe parts ſhe cunningly had plaï'd,
Beliefe vnto her miracles to winne,
Vnto the world were euery day bewraï'd,
From which the doubt did of her power begin,
Damnation yet to queſtion what ſhe ſaid
Made moſt ſuſpect the faith they had been in,
When their ſaluation eaſly might be bought,
Found not this yet the way that they had ſought.

When thoſe ill humours ripned to a head,
Bred by the ranknes of the plentious land,
And they not only ſtrangely from her fled,
Bound for her ancient libertie to ſtand,
But what their fathers gaue her being dead,
The ſonnes rap'd from her with a violent hand,
And thoſe her buildings moſt of all abuſ'd,
That with the waight their fathers coffins bruſ'd.

The wiſeſt and moſt prouident but build,
For time againe to waſtfully deſtroy,
The coſtly piles and monuments we guild,
Succeeding time ſhall reckon but a toy,
Viciſſitude impartially wild,
The goodlieſt things be ſubiect to annoy,
And what one age did ſtudiouſly maintaine,
The next againe accounteth vile and vaine.

Yet

Yet time doth tell, in ſome things they did erre,
That put their helpe her brauerie to deface,
When as the wealth, that taken was from her,
Others ſoone raiſed, that did them diſplace,
Their titles and their offices conferre
On ſuch before, as were obſcure and baſe, (goe,
Who would with her they likewiſe downe ſhould
And o'rthrew them that her did ouerthrow.

And th'Romiſh rites that with a cleerer ſight
The wiſeſt thought they iuſtly did reiect,
They after ſaw that the receiued light
Not altogether free was from defect,
Myſterious things being not conceiued right,
Thereof bred in the ignorant neglect,
For in opinion ſomething ſhort doth fall,
Wants there hath been and ſhall be ſtill in all.

But negligent ſecuritie and eaſe
Vnbridled ſenſualitie begat,
That only ſought his appetite to pleaſe,
As in the midſt it of abundance ſat,
The Church not willing others ſhould her praiſe
That ſhe was leane, when as her lands were fat,
Her ſelfe to too much libertie did giue,
Which ſome perceiu'd that in thoſe times did liue.

Pierce the wiſe Plowman in his viſion ſaw
Conſcience ſore hurt, yet ſorer was affraid
The ſeuen great ſinnes to hell him like to draw,
And to wiſe Clergie mainly cri'd for aid;
Falne ere he wiſt (whom perill much did awe)
On vncleane Prieſts whil'ſt faintly he him ſtaid,
Willing good Clergie t'eaſe his wretched caſe,
Whom theſe ſtrong Giants hotly had in chaſe.

Clergie call'd Friers which neere at hand did dwell,
And them requeſts to take in hand the cure,
But for their Leechcraft that they could not well,
He liſted not their dreſſing to endure,
When in his eare Need ſoftly him did tell
(And of his knowledge more did him aſſure)
They came for gain their end which they did make,
For which on them the charge of ſoules they take.

And voluntarie pouertie profeſt,
By food of Angels ſeeming as to liue;
But yet with them th'accounted were the beſt
That moſt to their fraternitie doe giue,
And beyond number that they were increaſ'd:
If ſo (quoth Conſcience) thee may I beleeue,
Then t'is in vaine more on them to beſtow,
If beyond number like they be to grow.

The

The Frier ſoone feeling Conſcience had him found,
And hearing how Hypocriſie did thriue,
That many Teachers euery where did wound,
For which Contrition miſerably did grieue:
Now in deceit to ſhew himſelfe profound,
His former hopes yet laſtly to reuiue
Gets the Popes letters, whereof he doth ſhape
Him a diſguiſe from Conſcience to eſcape.

And ſo towards goodly Vnitie he goes,
A ſtrong-built Caſtle ſtanding very hie,
Where Conſcience liu'd to keepe him from his foes,
Whom leſt ſome watchfull Centinell ſhould ſpie,
And him vnto the garriſon diſcloſe,
His cowle about him carefully doth tie,
Creepes to the gate and cloſely thereat beate,
As one that entrance gladly would intreate.

Peace the good porter readie ſtill at hand
It doth vnpin, and praies him God to ſaue,
And after ſaluing kindly doth demaund
What was his will, or who he there would haue?
The Frier low lowting croſſing with his hand,
Speak with Contrition (quoth he) I would craue.
Father (quoth Peace) your comming is in vaine,
For him of late Hypocriſie hath ſlaine.

God ſhield (quoth he) and turning vp the eyes,
To former health I hope him to reſtore,
For in my skill his ſound recouerie lies,
Doubt not thereof if ſetting God before.
Are you a Surgeon, Peace againe replies?
Yea (quoth the Frier) and ſent to heale his ſore:
Come neere (quoth Peace) and God your cõming ſpeed,
Neuer of help Contrition had more need.

And for more haſte he haleth in the Frier,
And his Lord Conſcience quickly of him told,
Who entertain'd him with right friendly cheere:
O Sir (quoth he) intreate you that I could
To lend your hand vnto my Cooſin deare
Contrition, whom a ſore diſeaſe doth hold,
That wounded by Hypocriſie of late,
Now lieth in moſt deſperate eſtate.

Sir (quoth the Frier) I hope him ſoone to cure,
Which to your comfort quickly you ſhall ſee,
Will he awhile my dreſſing but endure;
And to Contrition therewith commeth hee,
And by faire ſpeech himſelfe of him aſſure,
But firſt of all going thorough for his fee:
Which done (quoth he) if outwardly you ſhow
Sound, t'not auailes if inwardly or no.

But

But ſecretly aſſoiling of his ſin,
No other medcine will vnto him lay,
Saying that heauen his ſiluer him ſhould win,
And to giue Friers was better then to pray,
So he were ſhrieu'd what need he care a pin.
Thus with his patient he ſo long did play,
Vntill Contrition had forgot to weepe,
This the wiſe Plowman ſhew'd me from his ſleepe.

He ſaw their faults that looſly liued then,
Others againe our weakneſſes ſhall ſee:
For this is ſure he bideth not with men
That ſhall know all to be what they ſhould bee:
Yet let the faithfull and induſtrious pen
Haue the due merit, but returne to mee,
Whoſe fall this while blind fortune did deuiſe,
To be as ſtrange as ſtrangely I did riſe.

Thoſe ſecret foes yet ſubtly to deceiue,
That me maligning lifted at my ſtate,
The King to marry forward ſtill I heaue,
(His former wife being repudiate)
To *Anne* the ſiſter of the Duke of *Cleaue*,
The German Princes to confederate,
To back me ſtill gainſt thoſe againſt me lay,
Which as their owne retain'd me here in pay.

Which my deſtruction principally wrought,
When afterward abandoning her bed,
Which to his will to paſſe could not be brought,
So long as yet I beare about my head
The only man her ſaftie that had ſought,
Of her againe and only fauoured,
Which was the cauſe he haſted to my end,
Vpon whoſe fall hers likewiſe did depend.

For in his hie diſtemprature of blood
Who was ſo great whoſe life he did regard?
Or what was it that his deſires withſtood
He not inueſted were it nere ſo hard?
Nor held he me ſo abſolutely good,
That though I croſt him yet I ſhould be ſpar'd,
But with thoſe things I laſtly was to goe,
Which he to ground did violently throw.

When *Winchester* with all thoſe enemies
Whom my much power from audience had debar'd,
The longer time there miſchiefs to deuiſe,
Feeling with me how laſtly now it far'd,
When I had done the King that did ſuffice,
Laſtly thruſt in againſt me to be heard,
When all was ill contrarily turn'd good,
Making a maine to th'ſhedding of my blood.

And

And that the King his action doth deny,
And on my guilt doth altogether lay,
Hauing his ryot ſatisfied thereby,
Seemes not to know how I therein did ſway,
What late was truth conuerted hereſie:
When he in me had purchaſed his pray,
Himſelfe to cleere and ſatisfie the ſin,
Leaues me but late his inſtrument therein.

Thoſe lawes I made my ſelfe alone to pleaſe,
To giue me power more freely to my will,
Euen to my equals hurtfull ſundrie waies,
(Forced to things that moſt doe ſay were ill)
Vpon me now as violently ceaze,
By which I laſtly periſht by my skill,
On mine owne neck returning (as my due)
That heauie yoke wherein by me they drew.

My greatnes threatned by ill-boding eyes,
My actions ſtrangely cenſured of all,
Yet in my way my giddines not ſees
The pit wherein I likely was to fall:
O were the ſweets of mans felicities
Often amongſt not temp'red with ſome gall,
He would forget by his oreweening skill,
Iuſt heauen aboue doth cenſure good and ill.

Things ouer ranck doe neuer kindly beare,
As in the corne the fluxure when we ſee
Fill but the ſtraw when it ſhould feed the eare,
Rotting that time in ripening it ſhould bee,
And being once downe it ſelfe can neuer reare:
With vs well doth this ſimilie agree,
(By the wiſe man) due to the great in all,
By their owne weight b'ing broken in their fall.

Selfe-louing man what ſooner doth abuſe,
And more then his proſperitie doth wound?
Into the deepe but fall how can he chuſe
That ouer ſtrides whereon his foote to ground?
Who ſparingly proſperitie doth vſe,
And to himſelfe doth after-ill propound,
Vnto his height who happily doth clime,
Sits aboue fortune, and controlleth time.

Not chuſing that vs moſt delight doth bring,
And moſt that by the generall breath is freed,
Wooing that ſuffrage, but the vertuous thing
Which in it ſelfe is excellent indeed,
Of which the depth and perfect managing
Amongſt the moſt, but few there be that heed,
Affecting that agreeing with their blood,
Seldome enduring neuer yet was good.

But

But whil'ſt we ſtriue too ſuddenly to riſe
By flattring Princes with a ſeruill tong,
And being ſoothers to their tyrannies,
Worke our more woes by what doth many wrong,
And vnto others tending iniuries,
Vnto our ſelues it hapneth oft among
In our owne ſnares vnluckily are caught,
Whil'ſt our attempts fall inſtantly to naught.

The Counſell Chamber place of my arreſt,
Where chiefe I was, when greateſt was the ſtore,
And had my ſpeeches noted of the beſt,
That did them as hie Oracles adore:
A Parliament was laſtly my enqueſt,
That was my ſelfe a Parliament before,
The Tower hill ſcaffold laſt I did aſcend:
Thus the great'ſt man of *England* made his end.

FINIS.

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